

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed July 31, 2003 has been reviewed and the comments of the Patent and Trademark Office have been considered. Claims 16-22, 26-28, 43, and 44 were pending in the application. Claims 16, 22, 43, and 44 have been amended and no claims have been canceled or newly added. Therefore, claims 16-22, 26-28, 43, and 44 are pending in the application.

Applicants sincerely thank the examiner for indicating that claims 43 and 44 contain allowable subject matter. Claim 44 has been placed in independent form and is in condition for allowance in accordance with the indication in the Office Action. Furthermore, the allowable feature recited in claim 43 has now been included in independent claim 16 and applicants submit that claim 16 is now in condition for allowance for the same reasons as the indicated allowance of claim 43 in the Office Action.

This amendment changes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier. It should be noted that claim 22 has been amended only to correct a grammatical or typographical error and the amendment does not narrow the scope of the claim in any way.

In the Office Action, claims 16-18 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. patent 4,650,335 to Ito et al. (hereafter "Ito"). Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ito in view of U.S. patent 4,181,436 to Wasnund et al. Claims 20-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ito in view of Japanese document 8-334698. Claims 27 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ito in view of U.S. patent 5,270,855 to Hasegawa. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections, insofar as they are applicable to the pending claims, for at least the following reasons.

As discussed above, the feature indicated as being allowable in claim 43 has been added to independent claim 16. Therefore, claim 16 and all the other pending claims that depend from claim 16, either directly or indirectly, are now believed to be in condition for

allowance. Furthermore, claim 44 has been placed in independent form and is in condition for allowance in accordance with the indication in the Office Action.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants believe that the application is now in condition for allowance. An indication of the same is respectfully solicited. If there are any questions regarding the application, or if an examiner's amendment would facilitate the allowance of one or more of the claims, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the local telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper, or if a petition for extension of time is required for timely acceptance of same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge deposit account No. 19-0741 for any such fees; and applicants hereby petition for any needed extension of time.